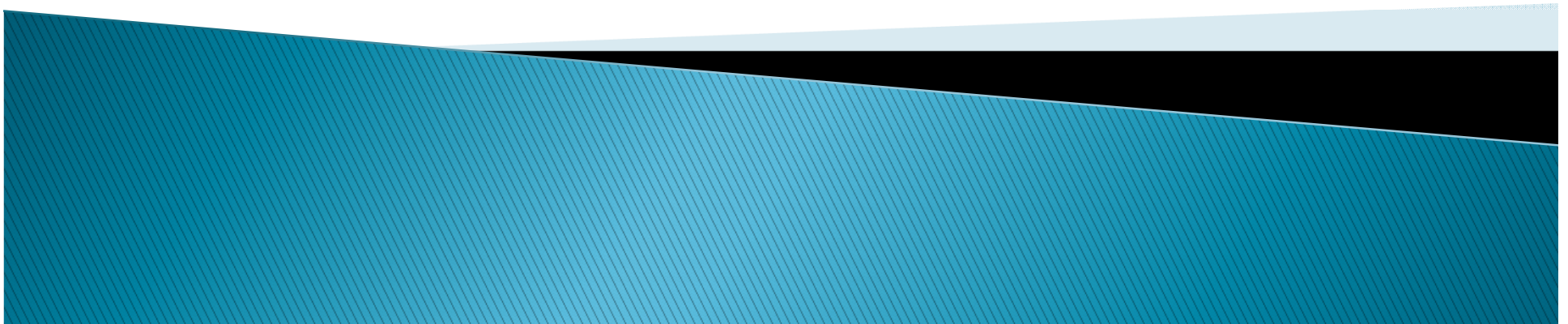


How do I Give Compassion and Not be Overwhelmed with Emotion?

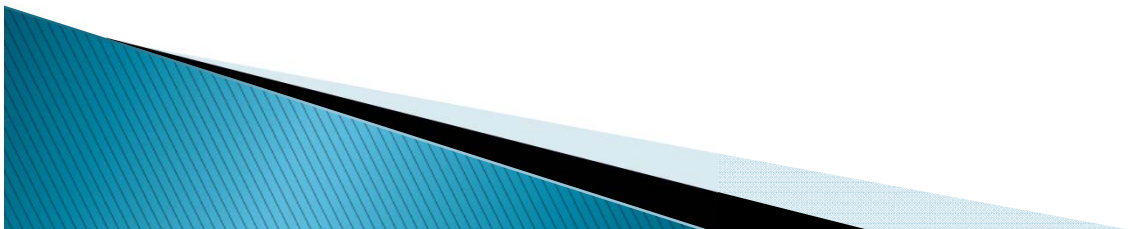
Debbie Ricker, OTR/L, RRD, CDP
Life Care Centers of America



The Aging Body

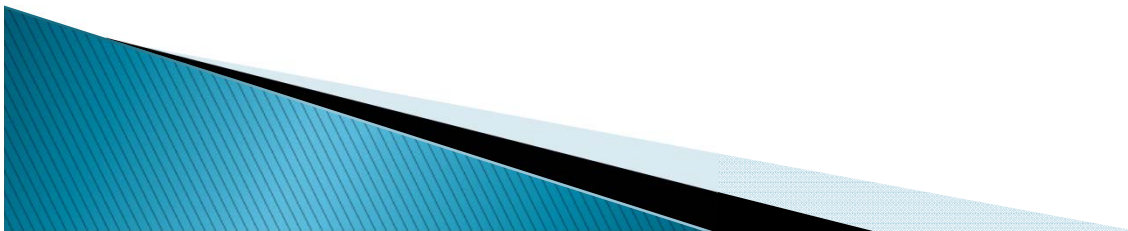
- ▶ Muscles generally become weaker
- ▶ Joints stiffen
- ▶ Responses begin to slow

- ▶ Disease Processes



The Aging Mind

- ▶ Concentration
- ▶ Momentary confusion
- ▶ Faulty decision making
- ▶ Problem solving
- ▶ Takes longer to learn new things
- ▶ Emotional changes
- ▶ Personality traits are entrenched



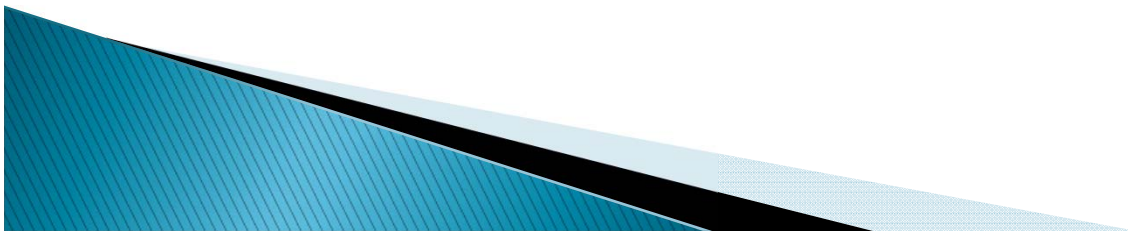
The Brain With Dementia

- ▶ Executive functions are greatly impaired–
 - Problem solving, decision making, judgment, self regulation, planning, follow through
- ▶ Functional skills are impaired– ADLs (bathing, dressing, eating); IADLs (paying bills, driving, cleaning house)



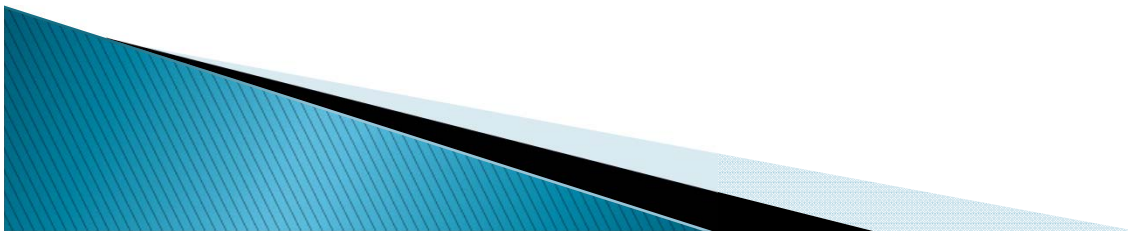
Behavior IS Communication

- ▶ 90% of patients with dementia
- ▶ Behaviors– biting, kicking, pinching, spitting, refusal to cooperate with medical procedures
- ▶ Usually caused by staff
- ▶ Approach is of utmost importance



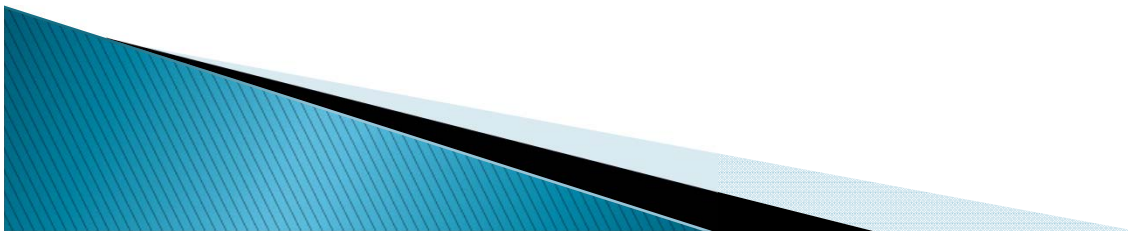
Effective Communication

- **Distraction**
- **Reminiscing**
- **Validation Therapy**



Effective Approaches

- ▶ Get into their world
- ▶ Don't take their attitude/demeanor/words personally



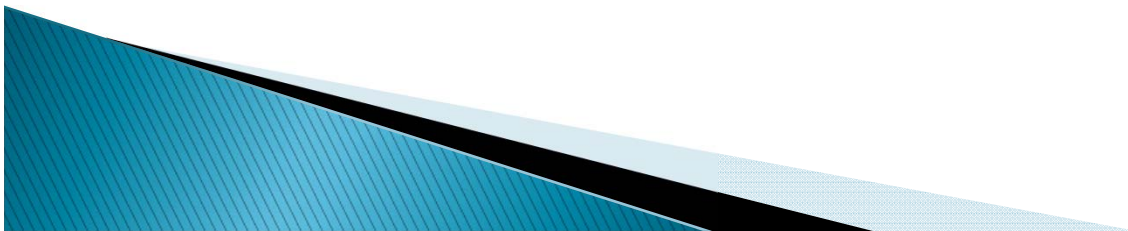
Need For Compassion

- ▶ Care of the patient is both science and art
- ▶ Competent application of science
- ▶ The art of being attentively present to the patient which promotes well-being, security, treatment adherence, and healing
- ▶ Intentional action to relieve suffering



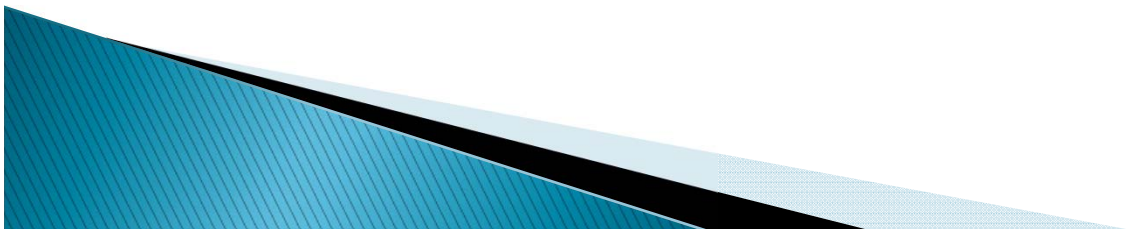
Benefits of Compassion to You

- ▶ Costs nothing
- ▶ Fills us with resilience and hope
- ▶ Enables staff to respond to patient's needs
- ▶ Encourages positive care practices
- ▶ Recognize stars or champions who are change agents



Positives

- ▶ Can be acquired or developed
- ▶ Used as an assessment model for the art of medicine and application of wisdom
- ▶ Holistic approach
- ▶ Become routine behaviors
- ▶ Staff are the driving force of compassionate care



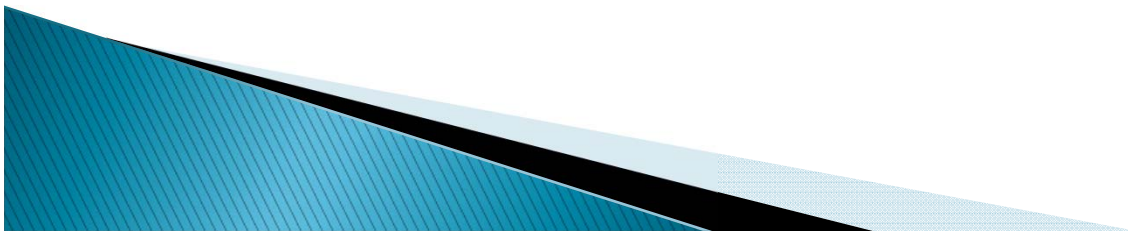
Beneficiaries of Compassionate Care

1. Clinicians, nurses, therapists, and other staff
2. Students and interns
3. Patients
4. Economic benefit to the company



Compassion Fatigue

- ▶ Most at risk
 - Intensive care
 - Mental health
 - Pediatrics
 - Oncology
 - Dementia



Burnout

- ▶ “A syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishments that can occur among individuals who do ‘people work’ of some kind”. (Maslach & Jackson, 1986, p.1)

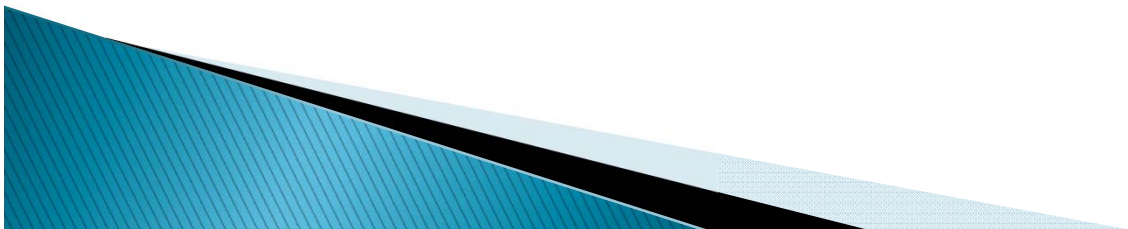
Possible factors:

- Personality characteristic
- Work related attitudes
- Work/organizational characteristics



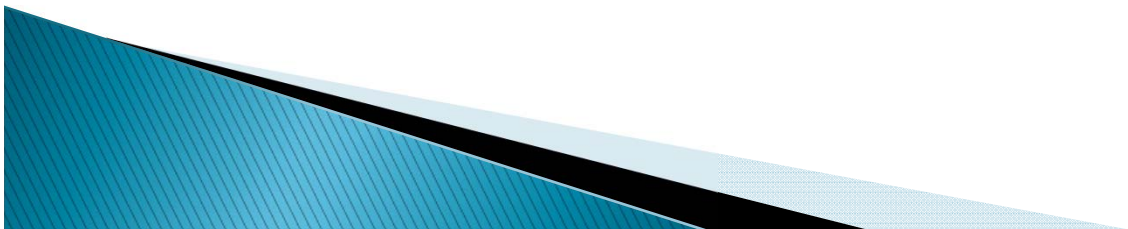
Personality Traits

- ▶ Type A personalities
- ▶ Coping styles
 - Escape–avoidance, problem solving, confrontation
- ▶ The ‘Big Five’
 - Neuroticism
 - Extroversion
 - Openness to experience
 - Being agreeable
 - conscientiousness



Work Related Attitudes

- ▶ Idealistic expectations
- ▶ Nurses' expectation that providing a certain level of care will lead to a positive outcome for every patient
- ▶ Incongruence between nurses' values and beliefs
 - Philosophy of care and organization's vision and values



Job-Related Stressors

- ▶ Patient to nurse ratio
- ▶ Client-related stressors– increased patient acuity and complexity
- ▶ Social support factors– education, collaboration, and support
- ▶ Degree of autonomy– retain control over decision making related to care



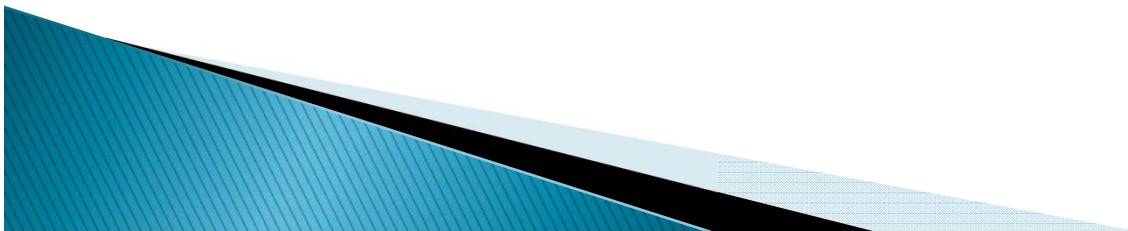
Compassion Fatigue

- ▶ (Secondary Traumatic Stress)
- ▶ “Natural consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other– the stress resulting from helping, or wanting to help, a traumatized or suffering person”.
- ▶ (Figley, 1995, p. 7)
- ▶ Suffering of the patient triggers a response, on multiple levels, in the provider



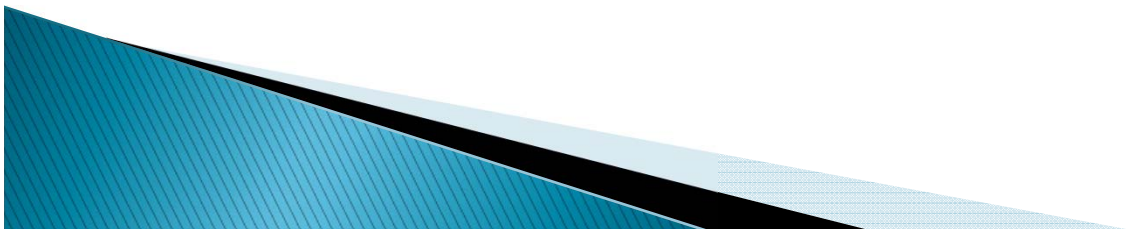
Risk of Compassion Fatigue

- ▶ Increases if:
 1. Ongoing exposure to suffering
 2. Nurse has memories that elicit an emotional response
 3. Unexpected disruptions in her/his life



Compassion

- ▶ Nurse's ability to pick up on individual's feelings:
 - Higher perception
 - Helper communication
 - Client perception
- ▶ (La Monica, 2001)



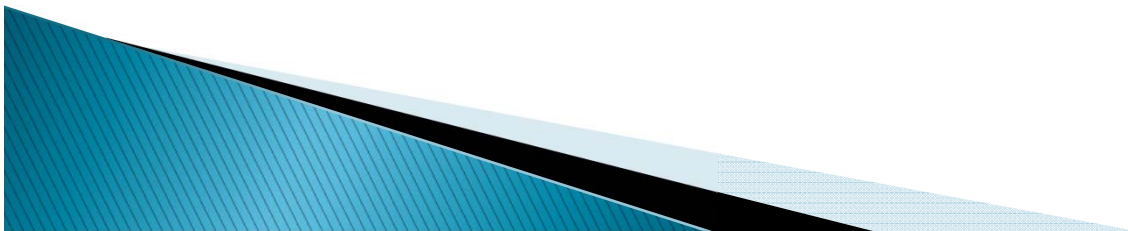
Resilience

- ▶ Capacity to move forward in a positive way from negative, traumatic, or stressful experiences (Walsh, 2006)
- ▶ Benefits:
- ▶ Enhance relationships
- ▶ Facilitate emotional insight
- ▶ Decrease vulnerability to adverse effects from the work environment
- ▶ (Jackson, Firtko, & Edenborough, 2007)



Protective Mechanisms

- ▶ **Share your stories and experiences**



Compassion Fatigue

- ▶ High levels of empathy and empathic response to a patient's pain, suffering, or traumatic experience create more vulnerability
 - ▶ (Adams, et al., 2006; Figley, 2002b)
- ▶ Key factors– empathic ability, empathic response may result in residual compassion stress
 - ▶ (Adams, et al., 2006; Figley, 2002a)



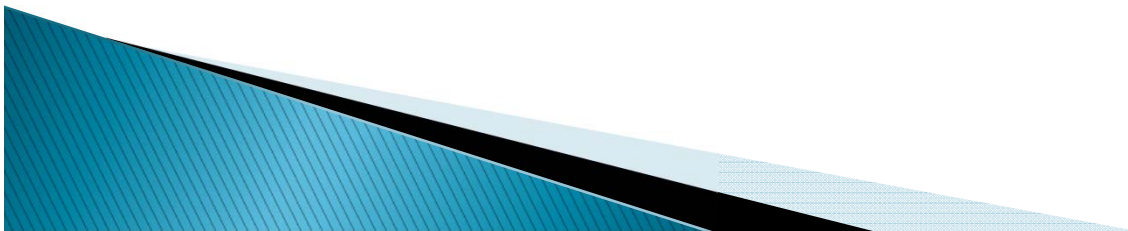
Vicarious Traumatization

- ▶ “Negative transformation in the therapist’s (or other trauma worker’s) inner experience resulting from empathic engagement with clients’ trauma material”
 - ▶ (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995b, p. 151)
- ▶ Results in the permanent disruption of the individual’s cognitive framework



Vicarious Traumatization

- ▶ Ongoing exposure to graphic accounts of human cruelty, trauma, and suffering
- ▶ May leave healthcare workers more vulnerable
- ▶ (Dunkley & Whelan, 2006)



Characteristics of Healthcare Professionals

- ▶ Personal history of abuse and/or personal life stressors
- ▶ Personal expectations
- ▶ Need to fulfill all patient needs
- ▶ Inadequate training
- ▶ Inexperience



Characteristics of the Treatment

- ▶ Invasiveness
- ▶ Life-threatening nature
- ▶ Long term effects

Context

- ▶ Type of patient
- ▶ Political, social, and cultural context within which the treatment occurred
- ▶ Ongoing advances in medical technology
- ▶ Keep patients alive for longer periods of time
- ▶ Eventual outcome is not altered
- ▶ (Pearlman & Maclan, 1995)



Constructivist Self Development Theory (CSDT)

- ▶ One's unique history :
- ▶ Experience
- ▶ Interpret
- ▶ Adapt to traumatic or highly stressful events

Unique to each individual

- ▶ Example– if a nurse grew up in home that used escape/avoidance
- ▶ Likely would use this negative coping strategy in other stressful situations
- ▶ (Saakvitne, Tennen, & Affleck, 1998)



5 Core Areas of Need

- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Trust
- ▶ Esteem
- ▶ Control
- ▶ Intimacy
- ▶ All of these can be disrupted by exposure to trauma

▶ (McCann & Pearlman, 1990)



Example

- ▶ Nurse in MASH unit– 1st hand observation, or listen to patient describe trauma

May experience the following:

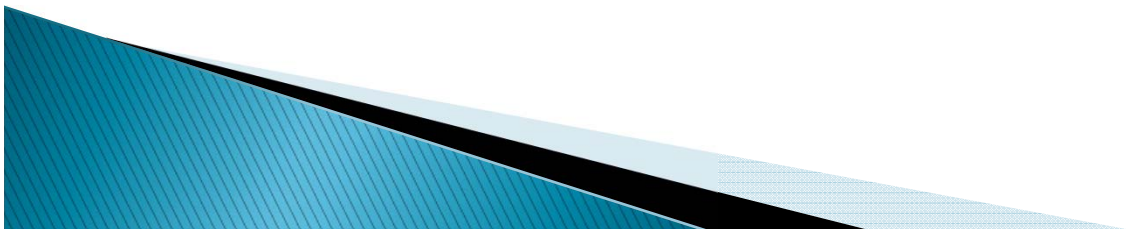
- ▶ Difficulty establishing and maintaining relationships with others
- ▶ Loss of independence
- ▶ Inability to tolerate extreme emotional responses to stressful situations
- ▶ Intrusive memories of the traumatic experience
- ▶ Altered belief system



CSDT

Importance of individual's ability to:

- ▶ Connect with others
- ▶ Perceive the self as competent
- ▶ Cope effectively with stress over time
- ▶ Interpret experiences in a meaningful way
- ▶ Allows individual to draw on previous experience to manage new experiences successfully
- ▶ (McCann & Pearlman, 1990)



Important Aspects

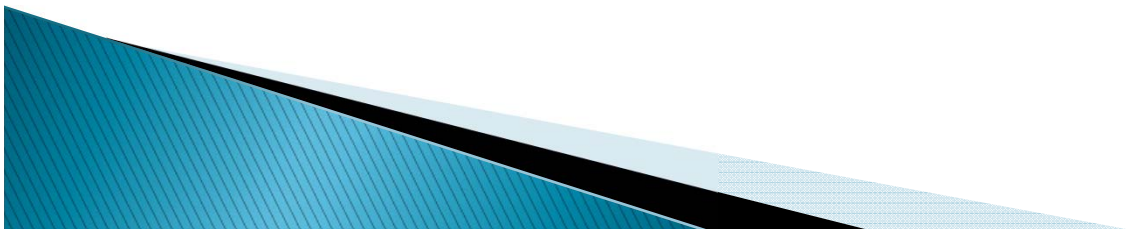
- ▶ Hematological cancer nurse
- ▶ Believes all patients will die
- ▶ Vs.
- ▶ Recognizes cues to be able to predict the progression of the disease, rather than “all patients will progress in the same way”

***Not every person who works with those traumatized will develop vicarious traumatization



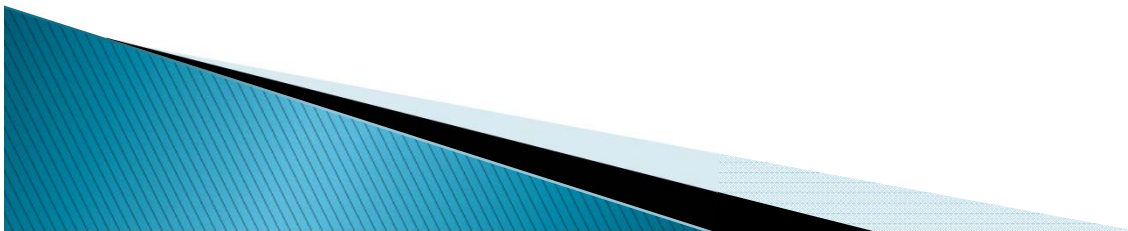
Burnout

- ▶ State of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress
- ▶ Feel overwhelmed and unable to meet constant demands
- ▶ As stress continues, you begin to lose interest or motivation that led you to take the job in the first place



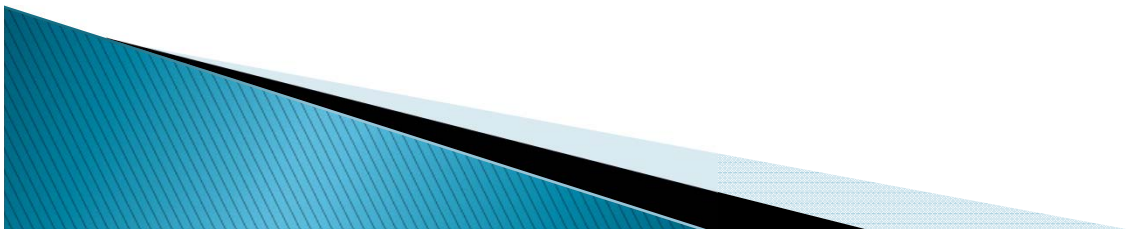
Burnout

- ▶ Reduces your productivity
- ▶ Saps your energy
- ▶ Leaves you feeling increasingly helpless, hopeless, cynical, and resentful
- ▶ Eventually you feel like you have nothing more to give



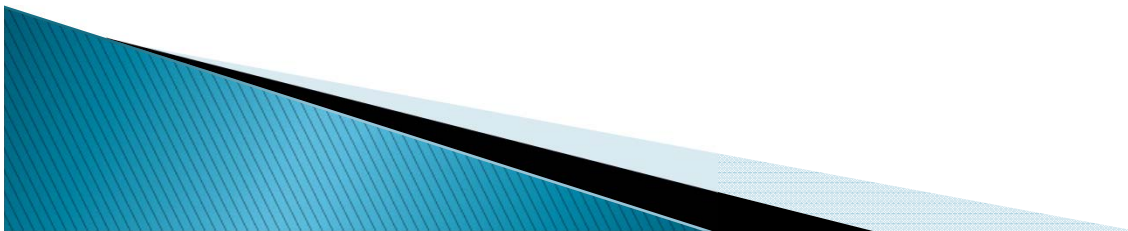
Could You Have Burnout?

- ▶ Have you become cynical/critical at work?
- ▶ Do you drag yourself to work and have trouble getting started once you arrive?
- ▶ Have you become irritable with co-workers, customers, or clients?
- ▶ Do you lack the energy to be consistently productive?
- ▶ Do you lack satisfaction from your achievements?



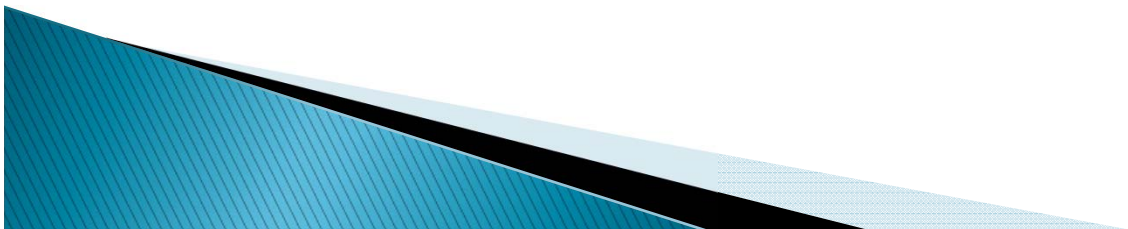
Could You Have Burnout?

- ▶ Do you feel disillusioned with your job?
- ▶ Are you using food, drugs, or alcohol to feel better or to simply not feel?
- ▶ Have your sleeping habits or appetite changed?
- ▶ Are you troubled by unexplained headaches, backaches, or other physical complaints?



Causes

- ▶ Lack of control
- ▶ Unclear job expectations
- ▶ Dysfunctional workplace dynamics
- ▶ Mismatch in values
- ▶ Poor job fit
- ▶ Extremes of activities– monotonous or chaotic
- ▶ Lack of social support
- ▶ Work–life imbalance



Risk Factors

- ▶ Identify strongly with work–lack balance
- ▶ Try to be everything to everyone
- ▶ Work in a helping profession
- ▶ Feel you have little or no control over your work



Consequences

- ▶ Excessive stress
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Insomnia
- ▶ Negative spillover into personal relationships/home life
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Alcohol or substance abuse
- ▶ Heart disease



Consequences

- ▶ High cholesterol
- ▶ Type 2 diabetes, especially in women
- ▶ Stroke
- ▶ Obesity
- ▶ Vulnerability to illnesses



Work Related Burnout

- ▶ Feel like you have little or no control over your work
- ▶ Lack of recognition or rewards for good work
- ▶ Unclear or overly demanding job expectations
- ▶ Doing work that's monotonous or unchallenging
- ▶ Working in a chaotic or high-pressure environment



Lifestyle Related

- ▶ Working too much, without enough time for relaxing and socializing
- ▶ Being expected to be too many things to too many people
- ▶ Taking on too many responsibilities, without enough help from others
- ▶ Not getting enough sleep
- ▶ Lack of close, supportive relationships



Personality Traits

- ▶ Perfectionist
- ▶ Pessimist
- ▶ Need to be on control
- ▶ Reluctant to delegate
- ▶ High achieving, Type A personality



On The Road to Burnout

- ▶ Every day is a bad day
- ▶ Caring about your work or home life seems like a total waste of energy
- ▶ You're exhausted all the time
- ▶ Majority of your day is spent on tasks you find either mind-numbingly dull or overwhelming
- ▶ Feel nothing you do makes a difference or is appreciated



Burnout

- ▶ Provides a fertile ground for the development of compassion fatigue and vicarious traumatization

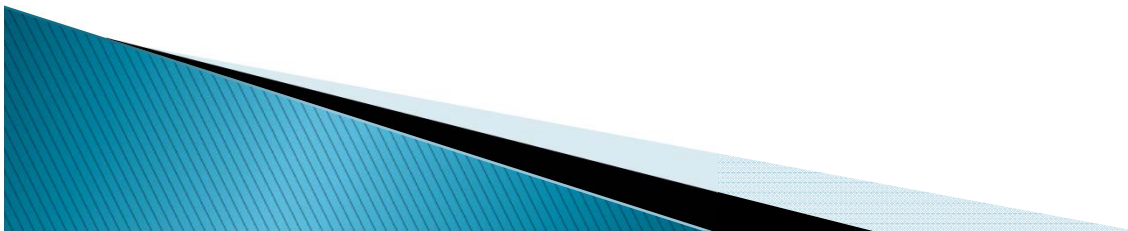
Hallmark signs:

- ▶ Anger and frustration
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Negative reactions toward others
- ▶ Cynicism
- ▶ Negativity
- ▶ Withdrawal



Strategies of Coping

- ▶ Recognize
- ▶ Reverse
- ▶ Resilience



Difference Between Stress and Burnout

Stress

- ▶ Over-engagement
- ▶ Emotions are over reactive
- ▶ Urgency and hyperactivity
- ▶ Loss of energy
- ▶ Leads to anxiety disorders

Burnout

- ▶ Disengagement
- ▶ Emotions are blunted
- ▶ Produces helplessness
- ▶ Hopelessness
- ▶ Loss of motivation, ideals, hope
- ▶ Detachment
- ▶ Depression

Stress

Burnout

Stress vs. Burnout

Stress

- ▶ Primary damage is physical
- ▶ May kill you prematurely

Burnout

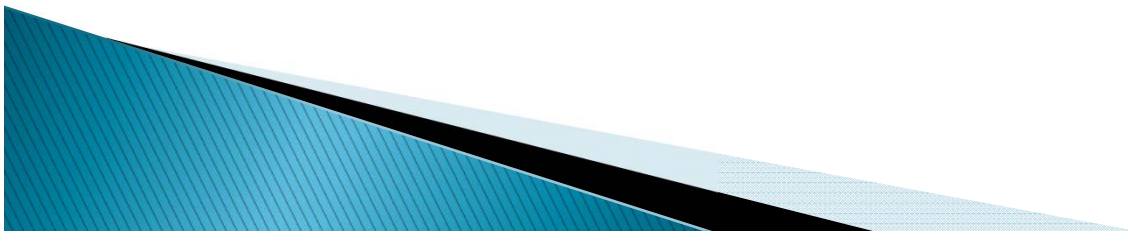
- ▶ Primary damage is emotional
- ▶ May make life seem not worth living

Stress

Burnout

Prevention

- ▶ Start the day with a relaxing ritual
- ▶ Adopt healthy eating, exercising, and sleeping habits
- ▶ Set boundaries
- ▶ Take a daily break from technology
- ▶ Nourish your creative side
- ▶ Learn how to manage stress



Recovery

- ▶ Slow down
- ▶ Get support
- ▶ Reevaluate your goals and priorities
- ▶ Acknowledge your losses
- ▶ The dream of your career
- ▶ Identity
- ▶ Physical and emotional energy
- ▶ Friends, fun, sense of community
- ▶ Joy, meaning, purpose that make life worthwhile



Coping

- ▶ Actively address problems
- ▶ Clarify your job description
- ▶ Ask for new duties
- ▶ Take time off



Coping

- ▶ Manage the stressors that contribute to burnout
- ▶ Evaluate your options
- ▶ Adjust your attitude
- ▶ Seek support
- ▶ Assess your interests, skills, and passions
- ▶ Get some exercise



Resources

- ▶ Mayo Clinic
- ▶ Mary Prendergast, MD
- ▶ Robert McClure
- ▶ Brenda Sabo, PhD, RN
- ▶ Stephen G. Post, PhD

